

How Does Your Workplace Make You Feel?

Today's workplace is more than just an accumulation of cubes and offices, interrupted by a scattering of conference rooms. It is a dynamic network of places—a combination of the physical and the cultural. It is a rich stage for behaviors and connections. The modern workplace is a tool for business and a touchstone for culture. The place where we spend a third of our lives deserves the attention of anthropologists, human resource professionals, technologists, social scientists, journey mappers and storytellers. We need to embrace this larger concept of the workplace and let it expand our thinking so we can focus on the true value of the workplace, that of elevating the employee experience to make it the most engaging and productive it can be.

Wellness is a significant part of this more liberated view of the workplace. In the past five years, wellness has become a key topic in workplace conversations in real estate and human resources (HR). In an effort to learn more about the practical actions companies are taking to make wellness a part of today's workplace, Colliers surveyed more than 200 of our clients in the summer of 2015. We asked them to tell us about the priorities they were setting and the actions they were taking to make wellness a reality at their companies. We were curious about four things:

- › **MOTIVATIONS:** What is driving the focus on wellness?
- › **LIFESTYLE PROGRAMS:** How is the company actively helping employees assess and improve their health?
- › **WORKPLACE:** What physical changes to the workplace are being made to promote wellness?
- › **MEASUREMENT:** Is the company experiencing tangible benefits from its wellness programs? And how is it measuring and reporting the impact?

Eighty-five percent of our respondents said wellness ranked toward the top of all initiatives in the company.

Employees driving wellness programs

We first wanted to know if wellness was even a priority at the companies surveyed, and the companies replied with a resounding and collective yes. When we asked why, respondents said the primary driver was employee demand. This tracks with other research that shows a company focus on wellness is valued by employees and aids in talent recruitment and retention. In fact, the 2012 Principal Financial Well-Being Index revealed that 45 percent of employees said they would stay with their current employer if they sponsored a wellness program, up from 40 percent in 2011. Companies that are listening, and responding, to their employees will see greater retention.

Ask and you shall receive

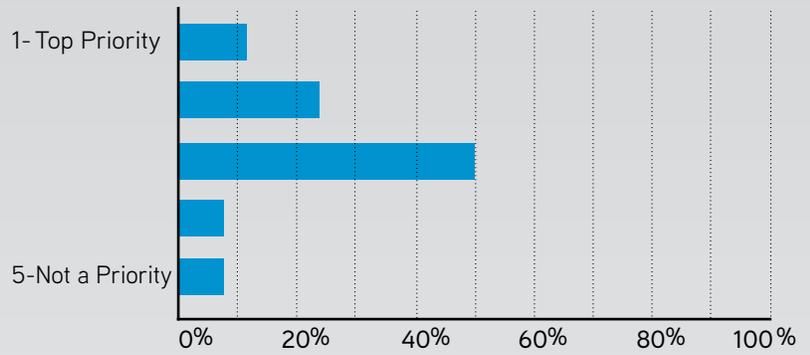
Since most of the respondents said wellness was a top priority and their employees are demanding it, we asked what actions they are taking to address this. We wanted to know specifically about two areas:

- > Lifestyle, disease assessment and management
- > Workplace design elements that encouraged well-being

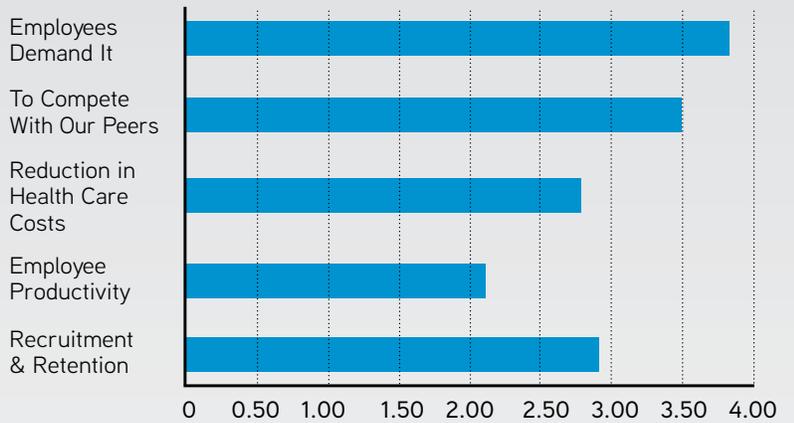
We asked about the types of screenings, checkups and health management programs being offered by employers. Fitness incentives, in the form of on-site fitness centers or employer-subsidized memberships to health clubs, were the top resource offered by employees, with smoking-cessation programs coming in second.

Of programs focused on empowering employees to develop healthy lifestyle habits, nutrition and weight-loss management are the third-most-common employer initiative. The Society for Human Resource Management's (SHRM) 2015 annual Employee Benefits Survey showed that providing preventive healthcare programs that helped employees remain healthy and save money was the No. 1 way to attract and retain talent. The survey found that preventive care programs will not only reduce employee health costs but will also result in higher employee morale and fewer sick days.

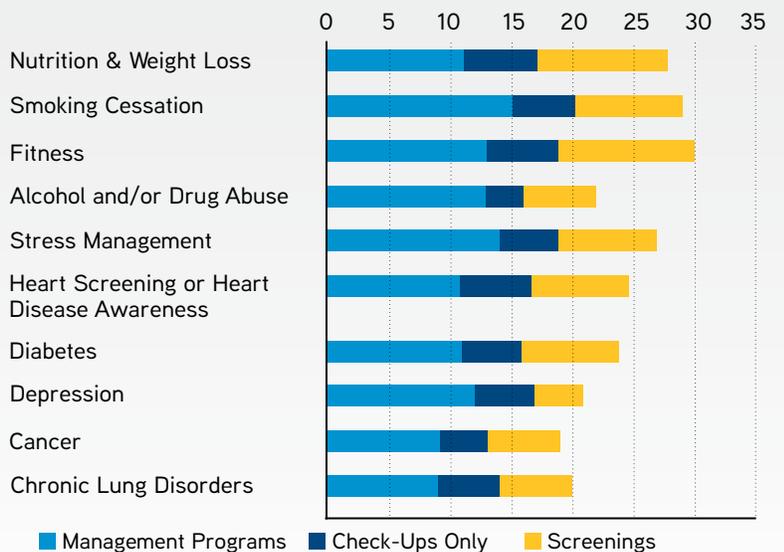
Is Wellness a Priority?



Why Is Wellness a Priority?



What Types of Programs are Offered?



Let there be light!

One of the most important perspectives we were seeking through our survey is how wellness concepts are being incorporated into workplace designs. So we asked if their workplaces actively incorporated one or more of 14 design features known to contribute to wellness. Access to natural light rose to the top. Many studies have shown that this is a strong contributor to well-being. For too long, workplaces have been constructed with offices lining the perimeter, shutting off sunlight to interior inhabitants. This survey finding indicates a conscious and welcome break from that trend. The use of glass for interior partitions also ranked highly. This aids in allowing natural light deeper into the workspace.

Wellness By Design

Percent of respondents who reported their workplace incorporated the following design features that contribute to employee wellness:

Access to natural light (daylighting)	100%
Ergonomics	100%
Restorative spaces (quiet rooms/areas)	78%
White noise (active noise reduction)	78%
Tall ceilings	67%
Interior walls made of glass	67%
Access to healthy food options	67%
Indoor air quality standard	56%
Walking encouragement through design (attractive stairs between conference rooms, etc.)	56%
Sit/stand desks	56%
Anti-microbial surface protection or special cleaning standards	44%
Multi-spectrum lighting (or circadian lighting controls)	33%
Greenery (plants in the workplace)	22%
Treadmill desks	11%

Having tall ceilings in workspaces was another design feature frequently cited. University of Minnesota researchers conducted experiments on the impact of high versus low ceilings and concluded that high ceilings helped people feel freer and more creative and better able to deal with abstractions. These are all attributes that contribute to innovation.

In the middle of the rankings fell designs that encourage movement. This is understandable as the idea that movement—any movement—is beneficial to health and mental acuity is just now being supported by data. A 2014 study by Stanford University researchers Marily Oppezzo and Daniel Schwartz (“Give Your Ideas Some Legs: The Positive Effect of Walking on Creative Thinking”) found that when people were enabled and encouraged to walk, even within the office, their levels of creativity rose. Studies have shown that walking also helps improve attention and short-term recall. All these measured benefits led to feelings of well-being and improved health.

How Wellness Programs Stacked Up:

- 74% YES** **Flu Shots**
Prior to flu season do you make flu shots available in your office for employees?
- 52% YES** **Employee Wellness Assessments**
Do you have a regular wellness assessment of employees?
- 52% YES** **Gym Membership**
Do you provide subsidies for gym or health club membership?
- 48% YES** **Healthy Eating**
Do you have a formal program to provide healthy food options in the your cafeteria?
- 48% YES** **Health Coach**
Do you have an in-house health coaching program to actively support the health and fitness goals of employees?
- 45% YES** **On-Site Fitness Center**
Do you have a fitness center on-site at your large locations?
- 26% YES** **Fitness Monitoring**
Do you subsidize or otherwise support employee use of wearable self-tracking devices such as Fitbit as part of their health or fitness regimen?



Not surprisingly, treadmill desks ranked low as a design feature. These desks enjoyed media attention a few years ago, but after experimenting with them, many companies found that very few employees actually used the desks. Their benefits do not appear to justify their expense, and our survey findings support this.

Do wellness programs benefit the bottom line?

Finally, we asked if companies are experiencing measurable benefits from their wellness programs and if they are reporting those benefits. There are many ways to measure the effectiveness of wellness programs, including employee attraction and retention, employee satisfaction and reduced sick days. We focused on reductions in healthcare costs, which have been reported to be influenced by wellness programs. According to a 2010 Harvard Business Review article by Leonard L. Berry, Ann M. Mirabito and Williams B. Baun ("What's the Hard Return on Employee Wellness Programs"), Johnson & Johnson estimated it saved \$250 million in healthcare bills over a 10-year period thanks to its wellness initiatives.

Nearly 60 percent of our survey respondents told us that they were indeed seeing reductions in company healthcare costs. However, when asked if they captured and reported these savings, more than 90 percent said they did not.

Our survey found both progress and challenges relating to making wellness a key ingredient of successful workplaces. As we collectively meet the challenge of how to make our workplaces the most engaging and productive places possible, we need to continue to share ideas, solutions and metrics.

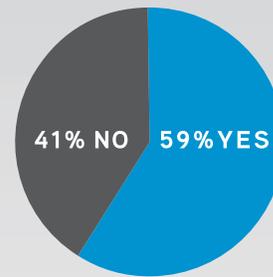
For this survey, we defined wellness as:

- > Disease assessment and management (heart disease, diabetes, etc.)
- > Lifestyle management (stress, substance abuse, etc.)
- > Well-being (mental and emotional health)

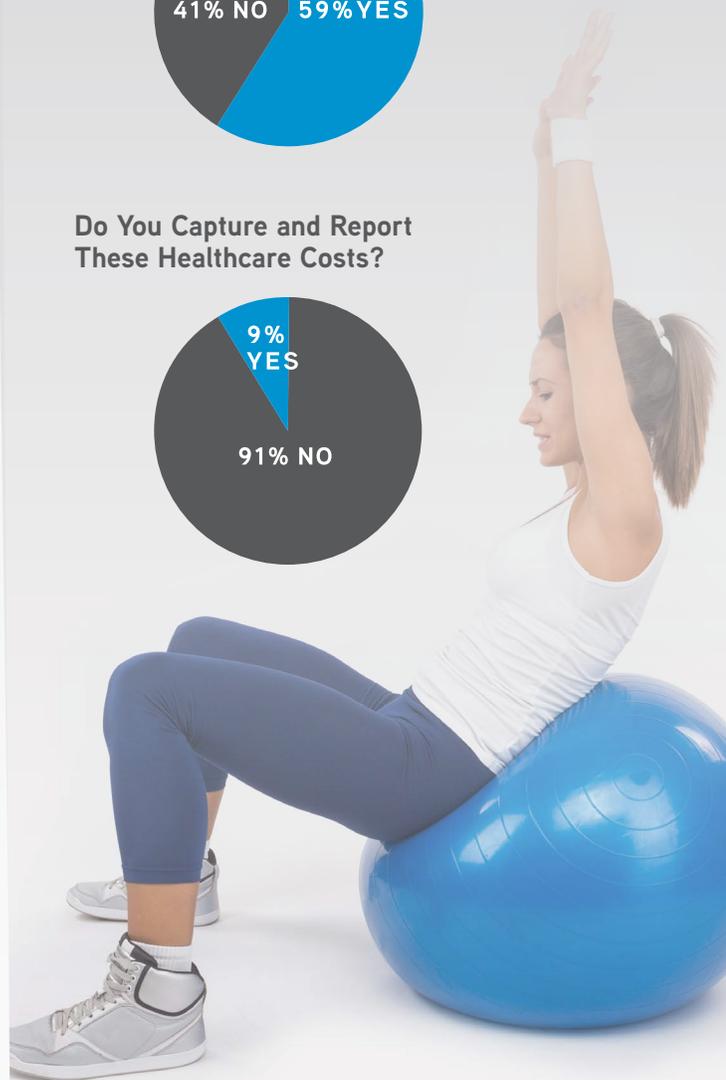
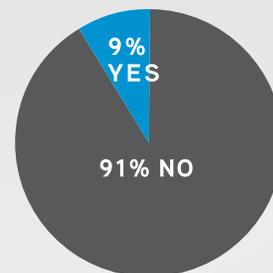
Survey was conducted in the summer of 2015.

To read more about wellness in the workplace and keep up to date on the latest trends, visit knowledge-leader.com and subscribe to our weekly email updates.

Do You See Actual Reductions In Health Care Costs Resulting From Your Wellness Programs?



Do You Capture and Report These Healthcare Costs?



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